

The problem is that this Trust Fund is part of the unified budget. As a result, it does not operate like a true trust fund. Under current budget rules, there is no assurance that tax revenues deposited in the trust fund will actually be spent on aviation infrastructure needs. Arbitrary budget caps often limit the amount that can be spent.

In fact, over time, aviation infrastructure needs have been dramatically underfunded. And, on occasion, money has been taken out of the aviation trust fund to pay FAA salaries or meet general budget needs. More often, the money is not spent, in order to offset increased spending for other programs unrelated to aviation.

As a result, by the end of this year, it is expected that the uncommitted surplus in the Trust Fund will be \$6.9 billion and the cash balance will be \$12.6 billion. It would be even higher if not for the fact that the taxes temporarily expired a few years ago. In 10 years, if nothing is done, CBO projects that the uncommitted balance will balloon to \$57 billion and the cash balance to \$63 billion!

This is clearly unacceptable. If the government is not going to spend the money then it should not be collecting the tax. The only thing worse than paying taxes is paying the tax and then not getting the promised benefit from it.

Unfortunately, the same type of problem exists with the Inland Waterways Trust Fund and the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. Both are part of the unified budget and both are accumulating unacceptable surpluses in the face of enormous infrastructure needs.

The Inland Waterways Trust Fund helps to finance improvements to the nation's navigable waterways, including locks and dams. Notwithstanding the significant cost of keeping these arteries of commerce open and functioning, the trust fund's surplus continues to grow. As of October 1, 1998, the Inland Waterway Trust Fund balance was \$342.3 million.

The Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, which helps to finance navigation needs at the nation's ports and harbors, has an even larger surplus. As of October 1, 1998, the fund's balance was \$1.29 billion. Harbor maintenance is critical to jobs, economic development and international trade. There is growing concern about the failure to adequately meet port infrastructure needs. There is also concern about the Supreme Court's March 1998 decision that the Harbor Maintenance Tax is unconstitutional as it relates to exports and the possibility it violates international commitments relating to imports. Both concerns emphasize the need for truth in budgeting.

Last year, we were confronted by the same problem in surface transportation. People who used the roads were paying gas taxes into a trust fund with no assurance that the money would be spent. We fixed that problem in the TEA-21 legislation by creating "firewalls" to ensure that all the gas tax money would be spent on road and transit improvements.

1999 will be the year of aviation. By that I mean, at a minimum, that we intend to do the same thing for aviation that we did for surface transportation last year. We intend to unlock the Trust Fund to ensure that the money can be spent to meet aviation infrastructure needs.

The needs are significant. Airports estimate, and GAO agrees, that meeting airport infra-

structure needs will require about \$10 billion per year. Currently airports have access to only about \$7 billion per year from all sources. Therefore, there is about a \$3 billion airport infrastructure funding gap that we need to close.

Over the last 5 years, the number of passengers in the U.S. has grown 37% to 655 million. It is expected to grow to 995 million in 10 years.

Daily aircraft delays were 19% higher in 1996 than in 1995. Mitre estimates that a 60% increase in airport capacity will be needed by 3015 just to prevent delays from increasing above current levels.

FAA's air traffic control facilities and equipment are also very old and badly in need of upgrades. The towers, TRACONS and centers that house air traffic controllers have building design lives of 20 years. Yet the average age of the towers and TRACONS is already 20 years and the Centers are on average 40 years old.

The FAA is still using computers that are so old that they are no longer used anywhere else in the world and replacement parts are no longer manufactured. When the old equipment breaks down, flights must be delayed to prevent endangering passengers.

The FAA is trying to expand airport capacity and modernize the air traffic control system. But this will take money, in many cases, a great deal of money. That money is in the Aviation Trust Fund and could be used if it were not for the current budget caps that are unrelated to the Trust Fund revenue.

Therefore, today, on a bipartisan basis, I am introducing legislation that will take the Aviation Trust Fund off budget. This will ensure that aviation tax revenue can be spent on aviation needs without regard to any arbitrary budget caps. To the extent the needs are demonstrated and the money is in the fund, it could be spent under this legislation.

I recognize that this will be controversial and we are prepared to work with the aviation community and others to perfect it.

As we do so, one of the things that will be absolutely vital to the final legislative package will be the assurance that the general fund payment will continue. I am not undertaking this effort merely to convert general fund obligations to trust fund spending. The general fund now pays a certain portion of the FAA's budget in lieu of taxes to compensate the FAA for government and military aircraft use of the system. In addition, the general fund payment is justified by the benefit aviation provides to the general economic well being of this country.

In TEA-21, the general fund payment for transit is within the "Firewalls" and is therefore guaranteed. I am committed to the same sort of treatment of the general fund in aviation.

I am also committed to ensure that the aviation needs are met using existing Trust Fund taxes and fees. I cannot conceive of a circumstance where I would support an increase in federal taxes. The current tax structure, coupled with the general fund contribution, provides enough money to meet aviation needs. If it is fully utilized, there will be no need for any new federal taxes.

The only possible exception involves the passenger facility charge (PFC). There, I am prepared to consider an increase if we unlock

the Trust Fund and it does not provide enough for airport improvements. It is my hope that the airlines and airports would work together on this to ensure that airports needs are met while airline interests are respected.

The legislation also provides a unique opportunity to consider fundamental structural reform at the FAA. It is not enough for the FAA to spend more money. We also want them to spend it wisely. I look forward to working with the aviation community, the Administration, and others on this.

Finally, I want to thank Congressman OBERSTAR for his support for this effort. He has been a proponent of aviation infrastructure spending and water infrastructure for a long time. Under this Chairmanship, the Airport Improvement Program achieved one of its highest funding levels ever. I look forward to working with him, Subcommittee Chairman DUNCAN, and ranking member LIPINSKI as we carry this legislation to a successful conclusion. I also look forward to working with Chairman BOEHLERT and ranking member BORSKI of the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee as they consider water resources development and infrastructure financing proposals.

A TRIBUTE TO SHIVA K. PANT

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Shiva K. Pant for his more than two decades of service to Fairfax County, Virginia commuters. Mr. Pant has faithfully served in the Fairfax County Government for the past twenty-five years and will be retiring in January of 1999. Even though the citizens of Fairfax County will be losing Mr. Pant's services with the Department of Transportation, he will still be working to clear our congested roads as the Government Relations Officer for Virginia with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

The Washington Metropolitan Area has excessive traffic needs to say the least, and Shiva Pant has been preparing to tackle them since he began his education. While still in India, Shiva Pant earned a Bachelor of Technology in Civil Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur, India in 1968. After relocating to the United States he immediately began work, and ultimately completed in 1969, a Master of Science in Civil Engineering (MSCE) with specialization in Transportation, at West Virginia University.

After mastering the academic theories of transportation and traffic control, Shiva Pant began his career with the State of Virginia as a Transportation Planner for the Virginia Department of Highways, the precursor to VDOT, starting in 1970. During his tenure in Richmond Mr. Pant established himself as a leader in the field of transportation through his service as project manager for the first Congressionally mandated statewide transit needs study.

In 1974, Shiva Pant relocated to Fairfax County to become Transportation Planning

Branch Chief for the Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning. After recognizing the enormous scope of Fairfax County's future transportation needs, Mr. Pant led the successful drive to establish an autonomous office of transportation for Fairfax County. Three years after transferring to Fairfax County, Shiva Pant, in 1977, became the first Director of the Fairfax County, Office of Transportation. A post he has faithfully held to this day.

As Director of the Office of Transportation, which now employs 60 staff full-time, Mr. Pant is head of the agency responsible for conducting and coordinating all aspects of highway and transit planning, implementation, operations and financing for all projects. Over the preceding two decades Mr. Pant was personally responsible for a number of key projects including the 35-mile Fairfax County Parkway, the Route 28 Transportation Tax District, he also designed a number of bond initiatives and lead the start-up of the County's own bus system which now operates over 120 buses.

Through out his career Shiva K. Pant has been an innovator and leader in the field of transportation for the State of Virginia and the County of Fairfax. After 28 years of service to the State and County, we will truly miss Mr. Pant's council and leadership. As much as we hate to lose his years of experience and personal expertise, I know he will be enormous value to both Virginia and WMATA in his new capacity as Government Relations Officer for Virginia.

REPEAL THE NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT

HON. BOB STUMP

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I am today reintroducing my legislation to repeal the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, the "motor-voter" bill.

The law, which took effect in most states on January 1, 1995, requires states to establish voter registration procedures for federal elections so that citizens may register to vote by mail, at state and local public assistance agencies and while applying for a driver's license. Motor voter provides no funding to the states to carry out any of these prescribed features.

The motor voter law was crafted to increase voter turnout by making the ballot more accessible. In one sense, it has achieved its goal. Motor voter has extended voting rights to non-citizens, dead people, children and even animals. On a more serious note, motor voter has fallen woefully short of its intended goal. While it is responsible for adding massive numbers of new voters to the rolls, voter turnout remains at dismally low levels. In 1996, voter participation dropped to 49.7%, one of the lowest rates in this century.

Motor voter has been a nightmare for many state election officials. Some have stated that motor voter has caused them to lose control over potential voter fraud. It ties their hands in removing "dead wood" from their rolls by re-

quiring them to keep registrants who fail to vote or who are unresponsive to voter registration correspondence to be maintained on voter rolls for years. Moreover, it fails to provide for citizenship verification. As troubling, the law has actually hindered citizens' voting rights. In the last election, in my home State of Arizona, voters who registered to vote while applying for a driver's license were turned away at the polls. Apparently, their applications were not properly forwarded to the election recorder. Mr. Speaker, this presents an interesting and poignant question: Why would we entrust our privileged right to vote to the wrong people?

Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no need for this unyielding federal presence in voter registration. The states carry the responsibility for administering all elections and should be free to do so without unnecessary and heavy-handed federal intervention. Last Congress, we were unsuccessful in mitigating some of the more egregious provision of motor voter. Although I found this disappointing, I was encouraged by the heightened interest in reversing the law.

Mr. Speaker, the fraud perpetuated by motor voter will undoubtedly contribute to increasing voter apathy. I urge my colleagues to continue their fight to preserve the integrity of the vote by repealing motor voter. Voters must have assurances that a fraudulent ballot will not negate their precious vote. Please join me in repealing this ill-conceived federal mandate, which is a threat to our democracy.

THE NOTCH BABY HEALTH CARE RELIEF ACT INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, today I am again introducing legislation to assist the over 6 million senior citizens who have been negatively impacted by the Social Security Amendments of 1977. Seniors born between the years 1917 and 1921—the "Notch Babies"—have received lower Social Security monthly payments than those seniors born shortly before or after this five year period. My legislation, the Notch Baby Health Care Relief Act, will offset the reduction in Social Security benefits by providing a tax credit for Medicare Part B premiums.

The approach taken in this bill is different that taken in my Notch Baby Act of 1999 or in any other Notch bill that has been introduced in the previous Congress. This legislation is particularly noteworthy because it was suggested to me last year by one of my own constituents—adjust Medicare insurance payments for Notch Babies. Specifically, my new bill provides a refundable tax credit for monthly Medicare Part B premiums for senior citizens born between the years 1917 and 1921, their spouses and their widows or widowers. The bill also eliminates the Medicare Part B premium late enrollment penalty for these individuals.

As health care expenses can take up a large proportion of a senior's retirement in-

come, this tax credit can go a long way to both correct the inequity caused by the Notch and to help seniors meet their health care needs. I urge my colleagues to review the Notch Baby Health Care Relief Act, to discuss this legislation with the seniors in their districts, and to join me in cosponsoring this important legislation.

AMERICA'S BLESSINGS

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member would like to commend to his colleagues this November 26, 1998, Omaha World Herald editorial. This extension would have been submitted earlier but the House was not in session. Of course, the sentiments expressed in the editorial are certainly worth sharing at the beginning of the new year and the new Congress.

[From the Omaha World-Herald, November 11, 1998]

AMERICA'S BLESSINGS EXTEND BEYOND THE NATION'S SHORES

As Americans count their blessings on Thanksgiving Day, it would be appropriate if they looked at the freedoms and opportunities that have been handed down from the Founding Fathers. It would be fitting if they gave thanks for family, health and prosperity.

However, they might also look beyond the borders of the United States as they identify things for which to be thankful. In this ever-shrinking world, global developments have a sustained influence on life in America.

The world has enough food. Indeed, surpluses are a bigger problem than hunger in some places. Certainly international relief efforts still must compensate for an inadequate market system that fails to get food to some hungry people. But the hunger that exists is not because the world's farmers have failed to produce enough.

Man is using less water. For many years, the prospect of regional water shortages, harming agriculture and industry, led to concerns about possible water wars in the next century, as water-short nations attempted to take possession of a neighbor's water supply. Now, with improved irrigation techniques and widespread conservation methods, many countries are demonstrating that existing water supplies can be stretched much further.

Negotiated agreements have produced a shaky peace between the factions in Northern Ireland and between the Israelis and Palestinians on the West Bank, raising hopes for a permanent decline in hostilities. A cease-fire has held up in Bosnia. Diplomacy has kept tensions in check on the Korean Peninsula. India and Pakistan have backed away from a violent confrontation over nuclear weapons.

Researchers are learning more about AIDS, although the epidemic still rages out of control in much of the world. The fact that HIV-positive men and women are being kept alive longer raises hopes of additional progress toward a treatment or immunization that would be both effective and affordable.

Because of declining birth rates in a number of countries, demographers are backing